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The Antiochian Archdiocese: Metropolitan Saba's First Steps Into American Ecumenism

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By Subdeacon Nektarios, M.A.

In a not so shocking display of heretical ecumenism during Holy Week, the new Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese Metropolitan, Saba (Isper), who has been grandstanded by many in the conservative new calendarist resist within movement as a staunch traditionalist and who recently replaced the newly-defrocked Joseph Zehaloui, has been photographed participating in heretical ecumenism with Syriac monophysites. On May 10th, 2024, according to the official Facebook page of the Archdiocese of the Syriac Orthodox Church for the Eastern United States, Monophysite Bishop, Mor Dionysius John Kawak, “on behalf of The Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches (SCOOCCh)” invited Metropolitan Saba to discuss various ecclesiastical issues occurring in the Middle East [1].

According to this official Facebook post from the Syriac Archdiocese, “following the discussions, an agape meal followed, uniting the prelates of our beloved Oriental Orthodox family. Joining in this occasion were His Eminence Archbishop Mor Titus Yeldho of the Malankara Archdiocese of the Syriac Orthodox Church in North America, His Eminence Mor Silvanos Ayub, Archbishop of the Malankara-Syriac Knanaya Archdiocese of America, Canada, and Europe, His Grace Bishop David of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of New York and New England, and His Grace Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan, the Primate of the Eastern Diocese” [2].

One might be initially inclined to think that this is no problem; that meeting with and having discussion with these various other groups is fine as long as they are not serving together or praying. Unfortunately, in the case, as in many others, Metropolitan Saba and his entourage of Antiochian Orthodox clergy are photographed with all of these various monophysite clergymen and hierarchs and praying together as they sit down for this planned “agape meal.” You can see in various photos one of the monophysite clergymen with his hands stretched out in prayer and many others on both sides making the sign of the cross while they pray together before eating.

These monophysite clergymen from the various so-called “Oriental Orthodox” jurisdictions still to this day, reject our Orthodox Christology as it was defined by the Holy Ecumenical Councils, reject all but three of the nine Ecumenical Councils, and they still venerate those pseudo-saints, such as Dioscorus and Severus who were declared heretics by these holy Ecumenical Councils and are condemned in our own infallible liturgical texts. In one instance of this we read in the daily Menaion for July 13th, a condemnation of Dioscorus, Eutyches and Severus which reads,

The Sunday on or After the 13th of July — Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils

Ode VIII, Canon II

In Chalcedon, the Fourth council set at naught Dioscorus, Eutyches and Severus, and utterly cut off from the Church of Christ the Master, the thorns of their heresy, which confused the natures of the Savior. With the Church we who are Orthodox hold them in derision [3].

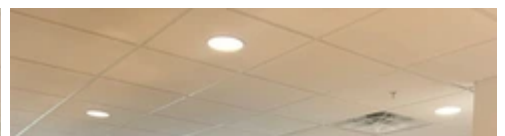
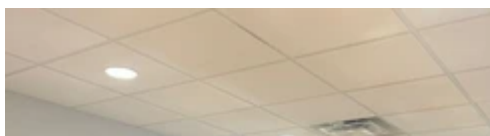
In addition to these liturgical texts condemning the heretics who the monophysites venerate, whose theology the Syriac church still holds and who Metropolitan Saba is praying with, the canons of the Orthodox Church expressly forbid praying with heretics in multiple canons. For example, the Apostolic Canons of the Holy Apostles and the Council of Laodicea state respectively,

Apostolic Canon XLV: Let a bishop, presbyter, or deacon, who has only prayed with heretics, be excommunicated: but if he has permitted them to perform any clerical office, let him be deposed [4].

Canon XXXIII of Laodicea: No one shall join in prayers with heretics or schismatics [5].

These events across Global Orthodoxy are becoming more frequent and can be seen across every jurisdiction from the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Moscow Patriarchate, Serbian Patriarchate, the Metropolia (OCA), and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. As sad as it is, we should not expect any less from the Antiochian Archdiocese or the Antiochian Patriarchate who have been in Eucharistic communion with these heretical monophysites since November of 1991.

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Orthodox Churches (SCOCh) committee, extender



Orthodox churches (Syriac) committee, extended (er), Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of the of North America, for a brotherly gathering. gathering, they spoke about numerous enriching disc difficulties of the Middle East. It was a remarkable op nds within our Orthodox community. ns, an agape meal followed, uniting the prelates of g in this occasion were His Eminence Archbishop M of the Syriac Orthodox Church in North America, H op of the Malankara-Syriac Knanaya Archdiocese o p David of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of New Yo lesrop Parsamyan, the Primate of the Eastern Dioce



Reference

[1]. Archdiocese of the Syriac Orthodox Church for the Eastern United States, "Album: Brotherly Gathering." Facebook Album, May 10th, 2024, www.facebook.com/media/set?vanity=Syriac.Orthodox.Archdiocese.Eastern.US&set=a.829724065847375

[2]. Ibid.

[3]. “Daily Menaion: July 13th,” St. Sergius Liturgical Resources, accessed May 10th, 2024, <http://www.st-sergius.org/services/aservices97.htm>

[4]. The Canons of the Holy and Altogether August Apostles, “Canon XLV,” in *Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14*, ed. Philip Schaff & Henry Wace (Peabody: Hendrickson Publications, 1999), 597.

[5]. The Canons of the Synod Held in the City of Laodicea, “Canon XXXIII,” in *Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 14*, ed. Philip Schaff & Henry Wace (Peabody: Hendrickson Publications, 1999), 150.